

**CITY OF MESA
MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING**

DATE: November 15, 2001 **TIME:** 7:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dave Wier, Chair
Art Jordan, Vice-Chair
Theresa Carmichael
Deb Duvall
Shanlyn Newman
Lori Osiecki
Wayne Pomeroy

MEMBERS ABSENT

Vince DiBella
Terry Smith

STAFF PRESENT

Shelly Allen
Katrina Bradshaw
Craig Crocker
Tony Felice
Greg Marek
Amy Morales
Patrick Murphy
Eric Norenburg
Bryan Raines
Rob Schultz

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeremy Jones
Rick Pfannenstiel

1. Call to Order

The November 15, 2001 meeting of the Downtown Development Committee was called to order at 7:00 a.m. in the City Council Chambers located at 57 E. First Street by Chair Wier.

2. Items from Citizens Present

There were no items from citizens present.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 18, 2001 Regular Meeting

It was moved by Wayne Pomeroy, seconded by Theresa Carmichael to approve the minutes.

Vote: 7 in favor; 0 opposed

4. Discuss and consider Special Use Permit Case No. ZA01-083TC, a Comprehensive Sign Plan for the Mesa Arts Center located at 155 N. Center Street.

Applicant: Rob Schultz, Mesa Arts Center Director
Staff Contact: Patrick Murphy, (480) 644-3964
e-mail address: patrick_murphy@ci.mesa.az.us
Recommendation: Approval

Mr. Murphy explained that the Mesa Arts Center is seeking approval of a Comprehensive Sign Plan in order to allow a banner to be hung on the west side of the building to advertise play productions within the Mesa Arts Center Theater. Based on the revised Sign Ordinance approved by City Council on October 8, 2001, banners are not allowed in

the Downtown Redevelopment Area unless they are approved as part of a Comprehensive Sign Plan. A Comprehensive Sign Plan can only be approved if it meets one of the three findings listed in the Sign Ordinance for a Comprehensive Sign Plan. Staff feels the Mesa Arts Center meets the second finding, which states:

The proposed or existing development exhibits unique characteristics of land use, architectural style, site location, physical scale, historical interest or other distinguishing features that represent a clear variation from conventional development.

Mr. Murphy explained that the proposed banner would include text to advertise the name of the play, play dates and times, and other related information. He also stated that the Mesa Arts Center anticipates placing a banner at this location no more than six times per calendar year. Mr. Murphy said staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit because the Mesa Arts Center meets at least one of the findings of a Comprehensive Sign Plan.

It was moved by Deb Duvall, seconded by Shanlyn Newman to approve the Special Use Permit Case No. ZA01-083TC, a Comprehensive Sign Plan for the Mesa Arts Center located at 155 N. Center Street.

Vote: 7 in favor; 0 opposed

5. **Discuss and consider amending the Design Review plans, Case No. DR99-004TC, to allow for fire truck access in the plaza area along Main Street associated with the Mesa Arts Center at 1 E. Main Street.**

Staff Contact: Shelly Allen, (480) 644-2773
e-mail address: shelly_allen@ci.mesa.az.us
Recommendation: Approval

Ms. Allen explained that an amendment to the design of the Mesa Arts Center has been proposed in order to allow the installation of a second fire truck access from Main Street into the Mesa Arts Center site. She said any significant amendments to the approved design review plans for the Mesa Arts Center must be brought back to the Downtown Development Committee for consideration and approval.

Ms. Allen explained that there is currently one fire lane access for the Mesa Arts Center. The Shadow Walk provides this access by serving the dual purpose of a pedestrian walkway area as well as a fire lane. Ms. Allen explained that the original plans were developed with only one fire lane access but once the plans were routed through the Building Department it was brought to the design committee's attention that a second fire lane would be needed to allow fire hoses to reach all areas of the building. The architectural team came up with a solution to add a small plaza area between the Mesa Arts Center and the existing retail buildings along Main Street. The plaza would be approximately 70 feet wide and 64 feet deep. This would allow the fire trucks to pull completely off of Main Street and prevent blockage of vehicular or pedestrian traffic. The architects are proposing that the plaza be scored concrete. Staff feels there should be some hardscape materials added to break up the mass of the scored concrete.

Ms. Allen said the plaza area would serve three purposes by providing a gathering area for pedestrians, a fire lane access point for fire trucks, and a space for the chilled water pipes.

Ms. Allen said the landscape materials proposed for the plaza area are the 36-inch box honey locust trees. Once those trees have matured, the space on the plaza will go from 70 feet wide to about 40 feet wide. Staff recommends that more trees be added to the area because the Fire Department only requires a 20-foot wide space for their fire trucks and without the trees, the open concrete plaza will look empty.

Staff recommends approval of the amendment to the design review plans subject to the following stipulations:

1. Provide additional landscaping to help improve the aesthetics of the plaza area, and soften the transition between the Mesa Arts Center and the retail buildings.
2. Provide a variety of hardscape materials to help break up the mass of scored concrete.

Ms. Allen introduced Jeremy Jones, architect for this project, to give a presentation on the proposed amendments.

Mr. Jones explained that the reason for needing a second fire lane is because there was too much distance between the main fire lane (the Shadow Walk) and the back of the buildings to comply with code requirements for fire access. They decided to create a small plaza area for the fire trucks to pull off of the street next to the theaters, which would create better access to the back of the buildings. They felt this plaza would also provide better pedestrian access to the ticket box office and also would connect the Pedestrian Pathway to the Shadow Walk in the Mesa Arts Center. Another advantage to this plaza is that it would provide better access for possible repairs to the two chilled water pipes located directly beneath it. As a result, all of the modifications made relating to this fire lane actually seemed to improve other aspects of the project.

Mr. Jones indicated that staff has expressed concern with the extensive pavement that is proposed for this plaza area. Staff feels that it doesn't create the atmosphere that is desired for the project and does not provide any design relief. The architects feel that the large paved plaza area would actually be welcomed because it would provide a good view of the buildings and the ground level portion. But in order to address staff's concerns, they have agreed to provide additional trees to break up the mass of the paving.

Mr. Jones said he would welcome any questions from the Board.

Ms. Duvall said she was not familiar enough with the current design of the project to know what the plaza area looked like before modifications were made. She asked if this plaza area was created especially for the fire lane access or if the plaza area had already existed.

Mr. Jones said the plaza area had already existed but the edge of it was modified to correspond to the broad curves which would bring you in from the street. He explained that materials from both the streetscape project and the Mesa Arts Center would be used to help create a gradual transition from the street in to the Mesa Arts Center.

Ms. Newman asked if the site plan shows the additional trees that staff has requested.

Ms. Allen said it does not include the additional trees that staff is requesting. She explained that staff feels the trees would help close the gap created by the 70-foot plaza area. The Fire Department does not need that much room for their trucks and there would still be 40 feet of space even after the trees have matured.

Mr. Jones said he was happy with the open space and didn't feel the additional trees were needed but he pointed out that the issue was really a matter of opinion. He mentioned that Ms. Gerber, the Mesa Arts Center Director, was concerned that the signage for the box office would lose visibility with too many trees.

Chair Wier asked if there was a curb cut for the driveway into the plaza area.

Mr. Jones said it was a rolled curb and most citizens walking or driving by would have no idea it was a fire access point.

Mr. Marek said the reason staff added the stipulation for the additional trees was because of the criticism that was voiced regarding a similar area of scored concrete at the corner of Main Street and Macdonald Street. He recalled that the streetscape improvements for Macdonald Street were postponed due to the pending reconstruction of the Bank One building and instead of laying the more expensive brick paving which would have to be torn up during construction of the building, Engineering decided to put in the scored concrete as a temporary measure until the Macdonald Street improvements were completed. As he mentioned, this was the source of some criticism from people who compared it to the look of a basketball court. Mr. Marek added that this area is even smaller than the one proposed at the Mesa Arts Center and staff thought the City might receive some criticism on such a large area of concrete right along Main Street.

Mr. Jones said he didn't feel the open space would be criticized in that way because it was surrounded by a 600 square foot project and the open space is very well proportioned to the project site.

Ms. Newman asked if the plaza area could be used for receptions, meetings, or performances or if it would have to remain clear at all times to allow fire truck access.

Mr. Jones said 20 feet of it would have to remain open at all times to allow clearance for a fire truck. The other space beyond the 20 feet clearance could be used for temporary booths or displays.

Mr. Marek pointed out that the plaza could be used as a staging area however it will not be wired with electrical capabilities to support any amplifiers or electrical equipment. He suggested that electrical wiring be added to support those kinds of activities similar to what was done on the south side of the City Plaza building.

Mr. Jordan said the additional plaza area is welcomed. He asked if the scored concrete that is proposed for the plaza is being used anywhere else on the site with the same exact color and material.

Mr. Jones said the colors will match the sidewalk immediately adjacent to it. He said they would be 2-foot squares trimmed with lava rock and various different kinds of stone. He said high quality materials are being used.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Fire Department requires any kind of identification of a fire line such as painted curbs, etc.

Mr. Jones said the curb will be painted red out on the street and fire lane signs will be posted by the street. No signage for the fire lane is proposed on the interior of the site.

Mr. Jordan felt it was important for the Fire Department to work with City staff to come up with identification that is clearly defined and unobstructed, but also does not detract from the project.

Mr. Jordan expressed interest in seeing the detailed copy of the landscape plan showing plant and tree species, locations, etc.

Mr. Jones said the plans are available for viewing at Gerry Gerber's office in the Arts and Cultural Division.

Ms. Allen added that she had a set of 95% drawings in her office and would be happy to share them with the Committee at any time.

Ms. Duvall said she did not have a strong opinion about the extra trees and therefore would like to make a motion to exclude the extra trees that staff has requested in order to save money in the budget.

Mr. Pomeroy said he would not support the motion because he felt the extra trees were important.

It was moved by Deb Duvall , seconded by Shanlyn Newman, to approve Case No. DR99-004TC, to allow for fire truck access in the plaza area along Main Street associated with the Mesa Arts Center at 1 E. Main Street subject to the following stipulation:

- 1. Provide a variety of hardscape materials to help break up the mass of scored concrete.**

**Vote: 6 in favor (Dave Wier, Theresa Carmichael, Deb Duvall, Art Jordan, Shanlyn Newman, Lori Osiecki)
1 opposed (Wayne Pomeroy)**

6. Discuss and consider the Revitalization and Redevelopment Element to the General Plan.

Staff Contact: Greg Marek, (480) 644-3961
e-mail address: greg_marek@ci.mesa.az.us

Mr. Marek said that the City Council will be discussing the comments to the General Plan at their meeting on November 19, 2001. He gave some background information on the status of the project and said that BRW was originally writing the elements to the General Plan. They have since resigned from the project. The Redevelopment Office provided 4-5 pages of comments to the Planning Department, which were given to the Downtown Development Committee in the Board packet. These comments were not included by the consultant, so the Planning Department suggested that the Redevelopment Office rewrite the element with our comments. Mr. Marek explained that he only had about a two days to rewrite the Redevelopment Element and incorporate staff's comments into the draft that will be reviewed by Council on November 19th. The revised draft was distributed prior to the meeting.

Mr. Marek said he would keep the Board informed of the status of the project and if there are no significant changes in the 60-day public comment period, the Planning Department would be able to make the changes at the staff level, therefore if the Board members have additional comments there is still a possibility to incorporate their remarks. Mr. Marek said his concerns with the Plan were that the Town Center Area should reflect the adopted Downtown Concept Plan that was approved by City Council in December of 1999. He said the problem with the proposed Redevelopment Element, which staff has tried to address, is that the Town Center Redevelopment Area is grouped with new redevelopment areas. He felt that the Town Center Redevelopment Area should be treated differently than new redevelopment areas and that the focus of redevelopment should be in the older parts of the community in west Mesa rather on retirement communities and R.V. parks on the east side. Again, he reiterated that any comments from the Board could be forwarded to the Planning Department.

Mr. Jordan asked how the comments would be forwarded to Council and Mr. Marek said he has illustrated his changes to the Redevelopment Element in a strikethrough format and was assured by the Planning Department that Council would receive them.

Mr. Jordan asked if the staff was comfortable with the strikethrough version and would be satisfied with it if it were approved.

Mr. Marek said he would feel comfortable with the changes and did not feel they would adversely impact the redevelopment program. He added that the implementation for the Revitalization and Redevelopment Element would be to follow the Downtown Concept Action Plan.

Mr. Jordan said he agreed with the majority of the comments that were made by Mr. Marek and asked if the original draft to the Redevelopment Element would have to be implemented if Mr. Marek's changes were not approved.

Ms. Duvall said it was her understanding that the first draft of the General Plan is currently under review by City staff and their comments will be incorporated into the second draft,

which will be reviewed by the public for 60 days. She asked if Mr. Marek's comments will be included in that second draft.

Mr. Marek said City Council will decide what will go in the draft that is distributed for public comment when they have their meeting on November 19th. Mr. Marek added that City Council may decide to extend the deadline for the election for the General Plan.

Ms. Duvall said she was confident that the revisions made by Mr. Marek are an improvement to the Redevelopment Element and suggested that the Board recommend to City Council to incorporate the revisions made by Mr. Marek in the draft that is distributed to the public. She further suggested that the recommendation be forwarded to City Council in written format. Mr. Pomeroy agreed with Ms. Duvall's suggestions.

It was moved by Deb Duvall, seconded by Wayne Pomeroy, to recommend that the revisions made to the Revitalization and Redevelopment Element to the General Plan be incorporated into the draft document that is distributed to the public for 60-day comment.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Board's comments or revisions on the Redevelopment Element could still be included in the draft document that is distributed to the public for 60-day review.

Mr. Marek said the Board's comments could be put in a letter format but probably wouldn't get to the City Council in time for the November 19th meeting. Again he mentioned that if they are not significant changes, the Planning Department could probably incorporate them administratively.

Mr. Jordan said he received some comments regarding this agenda item from Board member, Terry Smith, who could not be at the meeting today and proceeded to read her comments.

In summary, Ms. Smith's comments supported that neighborhood plans should be considered as an alternative method for neighborhood improvement rather than forming a redevelopment area. In addition, she felt that once a neighborhood is deemed a redevelopment area that the neighborhood input has less impact on the overall redevelopment.

Ms. Duvall said she didn't agree with some of the comments written by Ms. Smith.

Mr. Marek said he didn't necessarily agree with it either, however that is not what the Revitalization and Redevelopment Element really states. Mr. Marek explained that in order for the Redevelopment Office to work with a neighborhood, it must already be within a redevelopment area. The Neighborhood Outreach Program works with neighborhoods on developing a neighborhood plan. For example, the neighborhood adjacent to the Mesa Lutheran Hospital came to the City asking to form a Redevelopment Area in their neighborhood. The Redevelopment Office said redevelopment is used as an implementation tool, but first the neighborhood should work with the Neighborhood Outreach Office to work on a neighborhood plan. The Redevelopment Office could then work with the neighborhood to create a redevelopment area as a way to implement their neighborhood plan. Mr. Marek said he made some corrections to the Redevelopment

Element on how redevelopment areas are established following state law because it was not accurate.

Mr. Jordan asked how citizen comments on the General Plan are going to be addressed.

With there being no further discussion, Chair Wier asked the Board to vote on the motion.

Vote: 7 in favor, 0 opposed

7. View the video on the presentation given by Donovan Rypkema at the Best of Town Center Annual Meeting.

Due to technical difficulties, viewing of the video was delayed until the December meeting.

8. Director's Report, Greg Marek

Merry Main Street Event – The event will be held on November 30th from 5:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Development Strategy – The City will be working with Hunter Interests, an urban economic consulting firm, on a proposal for an overall development strategy for city-owned parcels in the downtown area. This may be discussed at the General Development Committee meeting on November 29th at 9:30 a.m. At that meeting the Committee will also address who should have jurisdiction on new redevelopment areas. It has been recommended that a new redevelopment committee be formed comprised of members from the Downtown Development Committee, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the Design Review Board.

Mr. Jordan asked if there was an official proposal that the Committee could read regarding that issue.

Mr. Marek said the Planning Department will be writing a staff report before the General Development Committee meeting on the 29th, which will be distributed to the Downtown Development Committee.

DDC Retreat – Mr. Marek said if the Committee is interested, staff could plan a DDC retreat after the first of the year and contact the Board members for available dates.

The consensus of the Board was that they are interested in having a retreat.

9. Report from Mesa Town Center Corporation, Tom Verploegen, Executive Director

Mr. Verploegen was not present at the meeting for the MTCC report due to illness.

10. Board Member Comments

Mr. Jordan said Ms. Smith had asked him to check on the status of the Irving School.

Mr. Marek said staff has held some preliminary discussions with the Historic Preservation Committee and will be meeting with the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board to look at

issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The RFQ will be looking for a non-profit group to find an arts related adaptive reuse for the building. The current Mesa Arts Center will probably be moving to the new site in 2005. Housing for Mesa has expressed some interest in responding to the RFQ.

Chair Wier asked if there will be a new RFP issued for Site 17.

Mr. Marek said both Donovan Rypkema and Hunter Interests have cautioned the City not to rush into a development project. Hunter Interests will be working on a development strategy for several sites in downtown. Mr. Marek said he would keep the Board abreast on the status of those projects.

11. Adjournment

With there being no further business, this meeting of the DDC was adjourned at 7:59 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Gregory J. Marek, Director of Redevelopment
Minutes prepared by Katrina Bradshaw